DIGGING DEEPER: IN-DEPTH BIBLE STUDY

Bible study is important to our growth as followers of Jesus. Jesus compares reading the Bible with a seed being planted in good soil. The seed planted in good soil represents those with an honest and good heart, who hear the word, apply it, and with patience, produce a crop or fruit. Read Luke 8:4-15.



Selection

What do I study?

1. Pray

"Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law." (Psalm 119:18)

2. Become Familiar with the Bible

- The Old Testament was written before Jesus' birth and tells about the people of Israel and anticipates the coming of Jesus the Messiah.
 The New Testament was written about Jesus' birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection and the years that followed as Christianity spread.
- Know the type of book you are reading such as Law, Prophet, History, Poetry, and so on. This can be found in the introduction to a Study Bible.
- Memorize the order of the Books of the Bible.
- Learn how to read the references: For example: 2 Timothy 3:16

2 = Second letter or book Timothy = Name of letter or book 3: = chapter :16 = verse

3. Select the Passage

Determine where the passage begins and ends.

4. Select a Version

Decide on a translation such as the King James Version (KJV), the New International Version (NIV), the New Living Translation (NLT), the New King James Version (NKJV), or the New American Standard Bible Update (NABU).

5. Remember the Four "Do-Nots"

- Do not "proof text" (take verses out of context).
- Do not be too literal (see Matthew 5:29, 30).
- Do not ignore the Bible's cultural, historical, and literary background.
- Do not read your own ideas into the Scriptures.



Observation

What do I see?

1. Make Use of Tools

Study Bibles, commentaries, concordances, Bible dictionaries, Bible encyclopedias, interlinear Bible (Greek and Hebrew to English), Bible handbooks, and Bible atlases, time lines, and topical Bibles.

2. Observe the Text

- Do word studies. Observe words or expressions. Notice synonyms (words that have similar meanings) and antonyms (words that have opposite meanings). Pay attention to reoccurring words.
- Who are the people in the passage?
- What are the important ideas in the passage?
- Where are the places in the story?
- · Pay attention to timespans.
- What is the literary genre (form), such as Narrative (story), Epic, Priestly Writings, Law, Liturgy, Poetry, Lament, Teaching, Prophecy, Gospel, Parable, Epistle (letter), or Apocalyptic literature?

3. Observe the Context

- What is the immediate context? What comes before and after the text?
- Who is talking? Who is listening?

4. Observe the Historical Setting

- When was this passage written?
- Where was this passage originally written?
- Who is the author? What is his occupation? What is his personality? Where is he from?
- Who is the original audience? To what nation do they belong? What is their history? Where do they live? Where are they from?
- What is the original purpose for this writing?
- Refer to maps, time lines, and other historical documents for more about the historical, sociological, and geographical setting.



Interpretation

What does it mean?

1. The Language Question

- What is the meaning of each word?
- What is the meaning in the original language (Hebrew or Greek)?
- How are significant words used elsewhere in scripture?
- How does the genre affect the text?
- What is the form (such as the structure of the Abraham story in Genesis 11-25)?
- What is the sentence structure?
- Why are particular words used?
- Compare this passage to other versions of the Bible.

2. The Historical Question

- How does the historical situation affect this text?
- How does the sociological situation affect this text?
- How does the geographical situation affect this text?

3. The Theological Question

- What truths are taught about the nature of God?
- What does this passage tell us about human nature?
- Does this passage have anything to say about sin?
- Does this passage teach truths about redemption and salvation?
- What does this passage have to say about the church and/or the Christian life?

4. The Tactical Question

• How does each paragraph fit into the author's reason for writing?



Life Application

How does this apply?

1. The Contemporary Question

- How do we apply what the author has said to the assumptions, values, and goals of our lives and society?
- What are the principles found in this passage that apply to the contemporary situation?
- How is God's redemption illustrated by this passage?
- Is there anything this passage has to say about certain social issues, such as racism, justice, poverty, or money?

2. The Personal Question

- How do we relate what the author says to our personalities?
- How do we relate this passage to our personal needs?
- How does this passage impact our families and close friends?
- What does this passage say about our moral decisions?
- How does the text affect our personal goals?
- How do these verses or principles apply to the Church as a body?

3. The Final Question

- What am I going to do about what I have learned?
- What personal goals am I going to set in my life to implement the truths found in this passage?
- How does this passage impact my relationship with God?

4. Pray About What You Learned

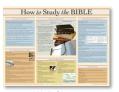
 Pray for God's strength to help you to grow through your study.



This free eChart is taken from the pamphlet *How to Study the Bible* ISBN 9781890947637. The full-color, glossy pamphlet offers concise steps for personal preparation and a step-by-step approach for inductive Bible study.

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